

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

NO. 989. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1887. PRICE TWOPENCE.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE exigencies of society demanded that Tilly should appear in Lady Clavering's drawing-room that evening. She would not stoop to pretend that she was ill; and the world, unfortunately, is not primitive enough to accept the unvarnished truth.

"I have been hearing unpleasant things about my accepted lover and future husband, and even more unpleasant things about myself, and I feel in no mood for dancing and small talk," could hardly be conveyed in any note without giving offence. Besides, when she began to dress, the feverish energy that had helped her to walk all the long way home was still upon her and made her welcome any new form of excitement. It was only when she was ready and waiting for her companion that she became aware that she was very tired, and, with the physical reaction, came the mental. The pity which had melted her heart was hardening into disgust. She was in a mood of revolt, of fire and anger against Jessie, and of something like revulsion from Fred.

She still said, "it is false;" but she also said, "suppose even a part of it were true?" and the very imagined possibility of such a thing went to swell her sense of the hatefulness of everything.

Not to see Fred again for days, for weeks, till the memory of those burning words had faded a little was her strongest wish; but in due time the carriage was announced, and she had to rise and go, knowing that in a few minutes she must meet him.

Fred had arrived first, and was waiting for her in the hall. He had his own reasons for being anxious to secure her at once, before any other fascinating gentleman could claim her. He hoped to carry her off to some quiet corner, where they might have an uninterrupted talk. Since his engagement, a rankling sense of dissatisfaction had mingled with his triumph, and materially lessened it; with the advance of spring, she was more constantly engaged, and he rarely saw her alone; when, by a happy chance, he did secure her ear, she always seemed to hold his ardent speeches, as it were, at arm's length—sometimes seriously, sometimes with dimpling mischief, but always with the effect of making him a trifle ridiculous.

Fred cared as little as most people to be made ridiculous, and he thought that the subject of his marriage ought to be treated more seriously. It was an important matter to him—he did not like to remember how important—and he meant to entreat Tilly to-night to fix some definite time.

His interview with her uncle had done nothing to soothe his sensitive pride; Uncle Bob, indeed, received him with rejoicing, but he made it a little too apparent, perhaps, that Fred had been chosen, not so much for his personal charm and fascination, as for a certain fitness in his circumstances which suited the millionaire's scheme. He had said in effect to the suitor—or so, at least, it seemed to him—

"You are poor; you haven't a sixpence to call your own, and you've no ground to be stuck-up about your family, for there isn't a pin's difference between it and my own; if I am willing to make you rich in goods and gear, you'll mind that you owe it all to me. Take it and spend it, and enjoy it; it's no bargain, my lad; it's a

free gift; if you had had anything to exchange for it, it would never have been yours."

Fred would, reasonably, have liked a different reception.

"You are the smartest and handsomest young fellow I have met, and therefore I give my best treasure to you," would have sounded sweeter even if it had not been strictly true. Fred had the desire to be loved for himself that is native to us all; and Uncle Bob's clumsy attempt to regard him mainly as an instrument to work out his own glorification, did nothing but awake in Fred a creeping doubt as to the value of the riches for which he was to pay so dear.

This was how matters stood on the night of Lady Clavering's opening "at home" for the season. Fred had made up his mind on two points: first, that he would persuade Tilly to marry him before summer; and, second, that having married her, he would take a longish farewell of Uncle Bob. Gratitude has its limits; Fred set them at an occasional letter to his benefactor, and, perhaps, an interview biennially in some conveniently rural spot. He had no mind to spoil the value of the free gift by seeing too much of the donor.

Tilly was glad of the semi-darkness of the wide hall which hid her face in the first moments of their meeting. She was afraid of what it might betray. Her ear was critical, as it had never been before, for every inflection of tone in his greeting.

"You are late," he said; "I thought you were never coming."

"I think it is just the hour we named," she said, wondering a little to find her voice quite steady.

"Ah, well," he said, "the minutes always look hours till you come."

He said it as if he meant it, and so he did. He loved her in his own way; he had made a hundred pretty speeches in his life which meant nothing but a felicitous stringing of words, but he had never made one which was more sincere.

She suffered him to draw her hand within his arm and to lead her to the door of the cloak-room. There he had to resign her; but he waited till she came out, and he followed her and her chaperon up the crowded staircase, where he distractedly received his portion of welcome from the smiling hostess. But he found a chance of whispering to Tilly:

"This is our dance; you promised it

me. You haven't forgotten? If you would rather not dance yet, I can find a seat."

She paused irresolute a moment.

"Yes," she said gravely, "I remember."

She turned to her chaperon.

"I am going to dance with Mr. Temple," she said.

The chaperon indicated a certain spot where she would be found waiting to guard Tilly's unpartnered moments, and they left her.

The music of a waltz was striking up; but Fred could not waste his chances in dancing, and she made no objection when he led her to the last of a suite of rooms unfilled as yet, and found a curtained recess where they could talk undisturbed.

Tilly had dressed that night with no eyes for her young beauty, and with hardly a thought of choice. She had forgotten to put on either necklace or bracelet, and the result was an extreme simplicity and a severity which was almost puritanical, and which coincided with a new gravity of expression. It brought out her beauty strikingly, and more than one pair of eyes followed the two as they passed from the drawing-room together. Fred was conscious of some inner change in her which, on the whole, he was inclined to interpret favourably; she was, at least, not in a laughing or teasing mood. He might count upon her listening to what he had to say.

"Sweetheart," he began, when they were safe from interruption, "our engagement is getting quite old now."

"Is it?" she said wonderingly. To her it was very new; so new that she had not wholly realised it yet.

"Very old, as engagements go. Quite old enough for us to think of the next step."

She did not help him, but that was natural. He changed the form of his appeal.

"You remember that day in the old City church, where your friend was married? I suppose it was the scent of the roses you wore; but the thought of summer haunted me that day, and all the time it was two other people I saw standing at the altar, and joining hands, and going away together, not into winter snow, but into beautiful summer weather, and being together for evermore. The summer is almost here, Tilly, and I want to spend it with you."

Her face had no response in it, and the

passive hand he held was cold; she shook her head faintly.

"Why not?" he asked, anticipating her objections; "is there anything so grave to hinder?"

"It is far too soon. My uncle has no thought of our marriage—yet."

"But you," he said with a jealous pang, "this is a question for you to decide."

"My decision must be the same as his. I have had him all my life;" there was a note of pleading in her voice. "He has been everything to me; don't ask me to leave him before he can spare me."

This was, undoubtedly, rather hard on Fred—to have an uncle preferred before him. He recognised that the task he had set himself was more difficult than he had supposed it, and he summoned all his patience.

"I know that I owe everything to him," he said, making the admission with what grace he could; "I should never have been anything but the veriest crawling worm but for his—his generosity," the word stuck somewhat in his throat. "He proposes to make me rich—well, to a man who has been a beggar for five-and-twenty years, that's a great deal more of a boon than you can understand; but he has given me the right to claim you, and that is worth all the riches in the world. And having given me that right, he can't reclaim it, or take away the charm of it, by making arbitrary conditions now. He has sanctioned our marriage; and a week or two, or a month or two, earlier will make no difference to his feelings about it. If he consents, you will not refuse?"

Her head had been averted while he spoke; but at his question she turned and looked up with visible reluctance. She spoke in answer to an inward compulsion: the poison of Jessie's words had entered into her mind, and tinged her thoughts, in spite of her determination to believe in him.

"Why are you in such a hurry, Fred?"

It was a strange question to ask a lover, and Fred even found it faintly amusing; but there was a shadow of reproach in his answer.

"My dearest, if you understood how much I love you, you would not ask that. I am in a hurry to make my happiness greater; to rescue it beyond hazard."

Jessie Temple had much to answer for. But for her, would the paralysing doubt ever have entered Tilly's mind—"if I were as poor as he, would he be in such

haste to grasp happiness?" This, too, was unfair to Fred, since he had a right to take pleasure in her wealth, provided always he loved her more than it.

Tilly vaguely felt that she was taking distorted views; but she did not know how to get back to a proper angle for looking at matters dispassionately, and she took refuge from her embarrassment by saying:

"We do not know each other well enough."

This was undoubtedly true as far as her knowledge of him went; she knew nothing of those bills of his that were out; of that innocent little club where baccarat was played for stakes that were hardly in proportion to the salary of a Civil servant; of other things, perhaps. "There are other things," Jessie had said with a kind of fierce awe in her bitter voice; "but what do I know of them?"

What did she know, indeed, or Tilly either, as she looked at him with those beautiful troubled eyes and said:

"I don't feel as if I knew you well enough yet, Fred."

"Heaven grant," he said to himself, "that she may never know anything of me, which would cause her a pang of shame." He was humbled before her innocent goodness, and there was something of grieved sorrow in his voice as he said:

"What can I do to make you believe in me?"

If he had been a consummate actor, he could not have said anything more fitted to help his cause.

She was touched and moved; his words, his glance, seemed to reproach the doubts that had struggled within her. In that yielding moment she might have granted him all he wished, had not an unlooked for interruption come to cut short their talk.

One or two couples had sauntered in and out of the room quite as intent upon each other as the pair in the windowed recess; but this time it was a servant whose business was with Fred.

"The gentleman is waiting below, sir," he said, and he presented Fred with a card on which a few pencilled words were scribbled.

Fred read them with a frown of annoyance and muttered protest.

"It's John," he said, turning to Tilly; "our precious cousin. Wants to see me, he says. I suppose I'll have to go—presently. I wonder what brings him? Something he imagines of more importance than it is, no doubt."

Fred's tones were light to scorn, but a hundred disagreeable possibilities were darting through his mind. That past, which was a sealed book to Tilly, was pretty well known to John, who had at times had an unpleasantly near acquaintance with it. If it should be—— Fred paled before the supposition to which he would not give a form in his thoughts. He was inwardly wondering how soon he could get away, when to his surprise Tilly broke in with an almost agitated urgency:

"John? John Temple? Oh, go; go at once! It must be something serious. Perhaps my uncle—— Why don't you go?"

"Shall I not take you back to Mrs. Lester first?"

"Oh, no; I shall wait here. You will come back at once and tell me?"

There was something almost imperious in the way in which she waved him off. She withdrew into the furthest corner of the window-seat, where a fold of the heavy curtain almost concealed her, and the crawling moments looked like hours till Fred came back to her.

There was reassurance in his step, in the whimsical, half-annoyed lines of his brow. He was so lightened of his own anxiety that he half forgot hers, till she put out her hand and grasped his arm.

"What is it?" she said in a whisper.

"Nothing, nothing," he said reassuringly, while he captured the hand and held it between his own. "I believe he's mad. What do you think he has come here for?"

"How can I tell?" she said, with a sigh of relief.

"To see you. He says he wants to speak to you a moment. Nothing very urgent, but something he has got on his foolish old mind to say; and he couldn't think of any other way than to come here and take his chance. Now, would anybody but John ever have conceived of such a plan?"

"What does he want to say?" she asked, shrinking back a little.

"Perhaps," said Fred, whose spirits had rebounded now that ugly sense of danger no longer oppressed him. "Perhaps he wants to warn you against me, before it is too late. He didn't confide in me, but that he naturally wouldn't do if my guess is right."

"That wouldn't be very like him," she said, with a hint of scorn.

"You don't need to see him, unless you like. I'll tell him you are engaged for

this dance; it will be perfectly true, for we haven't had ours yet."

"Is he downstairs? Will you take me to him?" she said.

He took her down by slow degrees between groups of new arrived guests, who were moving up, and others who now went down a step, and now paused to greet an acquaintance. There were people in the hall too, and many servants; but the room which they at last reached was untenanted, except by one tall, broad-chested man with a red-brown beard.

"Here he is!" said Fred gaily. "See, Tilly, they read his native honesty at a glance, and trusted him among all this wealth of furs!"

It was an unlucky allusion, but it made Tilly hold out both hands in welcome.

"You are very good to spare me a moment," John said, understanding her generous action. He took her hands for an instant in his own, and then loosed them gently.

"I can tell you she is!" said Fred, wagging his head, "and I am good, too, to spare her; you don't know how good, you old Diogenes, for I don't believe you ever danced in your life. Don't keep her too long, or I shall become ungovernable."

Tilly was the first to break silence when they were alone. "What is it, John?" she asked.

The room in which, in the stress and hurry of the hour a distracted servant had put them, had been used as an overflow cloak-room. By daylight it probably declared itself that melancholy thing—a breakfast room—because nobody dreamed of breakfasting in it; but the furniture was now all huddled into corners where its shabbiness was concealed by a drapery of cloaks, shawls, and great-coats: the limp and pendent garments, each with its distinguishing ticket whitely glimmering on it, looked, to Tilly's excited fancy, like so many ghostly eavesdroppers drawing near to listen to what John had to say. A single gas-jet, flaring above their heads and thickening the shadows in the corners, helped out the illusion. Even John seemed to be influenced by it, for he turned and thrust an investigating hand and foot among the wraps.

"There's no one there," he said with an embarrassed laugh, coming back to her.

"Is it treason, stratagem, or plot you have to reveal?" she said, speaking lightly.

"No, no," he said, "not that. Still it's a thing I don't much care to say."

He threw out his chest as if he would inhale a draught of courage.

"You see a great deal of Behrens, don't you?"

"Yes," she said wonderingly; "Uncle Bob does at least. He is with him daily."

"Ah!" said John, "so I hear. "Do you think you could persuade him to be less with this Behrens?"

Instead of answering she had a question to ask in her turn.

"Is there any reason why they shouldn't be together?"

"It's an unfair sort of friendship," he answered evasively. "The one man has experience, skill, knowledge of business and the world, and the other is as simple as a child."

"But that shouldn't make it unfair, unless the one makes a wrong use of his superior knowledge. John," she broke off, "will you tell me quite plainly?—I can understand better, much better than I once did, that there are unworthy people, and people with base motives in the world. Do you wish me to understand that Mr. Behrens is one of these?"

"I can't go so far as that," he said; "I've no right to go so far; but I don't like what I hear of him."

"Can you trust what you hear?"

"I think I can—otherwise I should not be here."

"It isn't so easy nowadays," he said, beginning to pace the room, "to tell a bad man from a good. In the old-fashioned story books you spotted your villain in the first page, and you had him of the same inky colour all through, you had no trouble about recognising him; but in the world we've got ourselves toned to such a uniform colour, that there's no telling which of us started white and which black."

"What do you dislike about him?" she asked, bringing him back to the point.

"Well, a good deal," he said slowly; "more than I could easily explain; but I'll give you one ground of uneasiness. Perhaps you know that your uncle has trusted a great deal of money to him for investment?"

"I know that it is money they talk about," she said, with an anxious look. "Uncle Bob thinks he ought to be a great deal richer than he is."

"Yes," said John; "and that is the sort of wish Behrens is born to encourage. There are ways of growing rich even in his line, which are fair and legitimate; but there are ways which may easily enough be

—the other thing. This man practically has the control of your uncle's means, and it takes a steady head and a scrupulous hand for a charge like that."

"You think he might make a bad use of his power?"

"I think he might use it to serve his own ends."

"What am I to do?" she asked urgently. She was standing under the gaslight and it illuminated her face and showed it to be full of trouble.

John's face was troubled too. He greatly disliked his task, for it was not in him to be a cordial hater or even a good suspecter; and he grieved to disenchant her, to rob her of one innocent, guileless belief.

"You have great influence over him," he said; "more influence than anyone else—even this Behrens."

"But, if I were to tell Uncle Bob his friend was a bad man, he wouldn't believe me," she said naively.

"Very likely not," he smiled. "He would still less believe it if he knew the accuser," he thought; but he kept this sting to himself. "And you wouldn't want him to believe without some proof. There is no need to go into the question of goodness or badness at all. So far, I dare say, no great mischief is done. I only want you to use your persuasiveness to keep him from investing any more money by his friend's advice. I hear of a company about to be promoted in which he will probably have a very large interest; they will propose him as a director. Get him to refuse. Persuade him, at least, first to get his lawyer to look into the matter—to withhold his signature. If you find all this too difficult, perhaps you can find some way of inducing him to put off clinching matters for a while. Delay would do as well as anything."

"I will try," she promised. "I don't think that I could interfere in the business part without blundering hopelessly; but I might persuade him to wait. Tell me," she said gravely, "supposing he did put his money into this company, what would be the result?"

"Very probably that he would lose it all."

"I don't think that would be such a dreadful misfortune," she said with an impatient sigh.

"It would be a terrible disappointment to him."

"Yes," she acquiesced; "it isn't to be thought of for him."

They were both silent for a space. He was looking at her; he had never seen her more beautiful than in her snow-white draperies, without a hint of ornament; but he had also never seen her look so grave, with so sad a curve of the lips which were made for smiles; so wistful a look in the clear, candid eyes.

"Is that all, John?" she said presently. "I thought perhaps—you brought me some news of the ring."

He shook his head.

"The mystery remains. Never mind; it will be cleared up one day, and if not—well, it has made no difference to you and me."

"But it has to you and our uncle, and yet you want to help him."

"Oh," he said with a sort of surprised indifference, as if he found nothing praiseworthy in his conduct, "I was bound to do that."

"There's one thing more," he said with something of an effort. One thing? he could have said a thousand. He could have told her that he loved her well and truly, and had loved her since the first day he saw her; he could, but for the great restraint he put upon himself, have easily forgotten that he was penniless, and disgraced in the eyes of her guardian, and for a moment, at least, could have held himself worthy to utter all his eager heart. But he had been taught by the severities of life to school himself well, and he had strength enough to face his longing, and master it. Yet the temptation was great and the renunciation proportionately to his honour, for there was a look in her eyes as she lifted them to his, which did not speak well for the happiness that was more to him than his own unhappiness; and it was this look of vague, half-fear, half-trouble, rather than reluctance on his part to speak them that made his words come out at last with a blunt air of constraint.

"I have heard from Fred about you both, and I only wish to say, my dear, God bless you, and may you be as happy as those who love you wish you to be."

She looked beyond him with a pallid face in which the trouble seemed to grow, and she made him no answer; her hands hung straight down at her sides, her lips were hardly parted with a breath; she might have been carved in marble, so still she stood.

John was not even sure that she had heard his words, but a shadow which seemed to pass from her fell deep on his spirit.

The lover was never born who willingly and without a pang resigned the woman of his heart's choice to another; but perhaps this big, simple man touched the supreme height of love when he felt that he would give all he had, or ever dreamed of having, to make Fred worthy of her. "Make her happy, and let all the suffering be mine."

The cousins met by chance next day upon the bustling City pavement. Fred made a motion as if he would go by disdainfully with a tossed-up head—an affront John could have supported tranquilly; but he changed his mind, and stopped his cousin with an imperious sign.

"Well," Fred said, with smothered anger, "you kept Tilly a precious time last night!"

"I had some things to say to her," said John, quietly.

"About me, perhaps," sneered Fred.

"I can well believe that your congratulations were so eager and hearty that they took some time to get said."

"There was not much about you."

John's determinedly unruffled aspect was extremely irritating to the young man, who was anxious to pick a quarrel with somebody, and thus to justify his ill-humour.

"Well," he demanded, "what did you talk about? I think I have a right to know, since whatever it was it sent Tilly home."

"Miss Burton would probably be quite willing to tell you. There is no mystery to get into a rage over. We talked chiefly, almost wholly, of Mr. Burton."

"I admire your taste," said Fred, with an ironical shrug. "I try to forget his existence except when it is too grossly forced on me."

"That doesn't come very well from you," said John, with great dryness.

"Doesn't it? Much you know about it. He isn't going to be your uncle-in-law."

He was about to pass on when second thoughts made him pause and turn.

"If that's your topic, you might as well turn it next time to some purpose."

"To what purpose?" demanded John, with sudden fire and energy.

"Oh, nothing that you won't quite enjoy," said Fred, with a wicked smile.

"You always professed yourself anxious to serve me, and you can't do it better than by helping on my marriage as speedily as possible. It's more important than you imagine. I tell you I'm in a confounded hole——" his voice lost its mockery and

took on a doggedness that betrayed his anxiety.

"If you propose to marry to get out of this confounded hole, how much help are you likely to get from me?" John asked with whole deeps of righteous wrath and contempt in his tones.

Fred looked at him, and as he saw his tranquil brows drawn in a frown, and the brown eyes alight with anger, he laughed, and his voice recovered some of the airy mockery which it put on so readily for this big foolish fellow.

"You are a delightful simpleton," he said. "Do you expect me to rehearse my love for all the City to hear?—to give you a rhapsody—perhaps to indite a sonnet to the eyebrow of my mistress here in Fleet Street? Do you want a lesson in the art of love-making? Would you like me to go down on my knees and show you how it is done? I would willingly oblige you, dear cousin, but unfortunately the exigencies of the Patents Office won't permit it, and I daresay the Bank is at this moment clamouring for its most valuable sub-cashier. Good-bye; and next time you lack a subject of talk you can remember that little theme I hinted at."

SOUTH AFRICAN SKETCHES.

LOST.

"DID my missus ever tell you how she and Liza there got lost when we were trekking up from East London last year?" asked my genial host, Tom Carey.

The scene was Klipdrift, on the Vaal River, the time was the year of grace 1872, and Tom Carey and I were sitting at the open doorway of his swish and stone tenement. Inside we could hear the voice of Tom's wife crooning a lullaby to a new arrival, a little pink-and-white baby boy some two or three months old; while running about near us was the Liza in question, a little, blue-eyed, fair-haired girl of some five summers.

In 1872, Klipdrift was the most civilised camp in the then recently-acquired Waterboer's Territory, and had, at the close of 1871, been selected by the Cape Government as the metropolis of the new annexation. There were at least twenty-four houses, some of brick, some of mud and stones, and some of stones alone. These formed an irregular street along the low cliff which overhung the Vaal, and on the

kopje above them was the chaos of mounds and holes, piles of boulders and broken hills of stones, which marked the spot where hundreds of claims had been opened in the palmy days of Klipdrift, before the dry diggings out away on the dusty veldt at De Beer's and Du Toit's Pan had been heard of. Here and there, down towards the drift, stood a ragged tent, a hut of loose stones, or a lean-to shanty made of boards and branches, where one or two impoverished diggers, the owners of the cradles which yet remained on the river brink, still lingered, the remnant of the five thousand men whose tents had, a few months back, whitened the earth, and whose brawny arms had sunk the innumerable pits, and raised the mounds of stone and earth. On the Pniel side of the river the hill was scored and pitted in a thousand directions, while near the stream itself the graceful South African willows, fortunately preserved by a very strict clause of digger law, bowed their feathery arms over the sparkling water.

I said that I had never heard of the occurrence in question, and at the same time expressed my great anxiety to be at once made acquainted with every detail.

"We had been about a year out from home," said Tom, "and were living, as you know, at East London, when the great rush to the Fields took place. It was about December, '70, that dry digging was first talked about, and about the beginning of the following year the rush took place. I had not done so well as I expected at East London. I was neither better nor worse off than when we had left England, and I had expected to be much better off. Anyhow I was not altogether satisfied, and, like everybody else, I thought I had only to go to the Fields to make a fortune. I talked it over with Mary. She was dead against it at first, but, when she saw my mind was bent on going, she gave way; only she insisted on going with me, for I had intended leaving her behind, and I think on the whole she was right. I bought a waggon and a span of oxen, laid in a supply of grub for the journey, and of picks and spades for the diggings, and one morning off we started. We went on from King William's Town to Fort Beaufort, from that to Bedford, and from Bedford to Cradock without accident. We stayed at Cradock two days.

"The first night out from Cradock we outspanned near Zoutpan's Drift, on the Great Fish River, just under the range of

mountains called Bushman's Berg. Next morning when I turned out of the waggon a little before daybreak, not one of my oxen could I see. My boys—I had three of them, one Tottie and two Kaffirs—knew nothing about them; so I swore at them and sent them to hunt them up, one of them down the river and one of them up, as I thought the cattle would be likely to keep near the water; while I started the third up the Burghers Spruit, which runs into the Fish River just there. That done, we had nothing to do but to have breakfast and then sit down and wait.

"The sun was pretty high overhead, it must have been quite noon, and we had seen nothing of the boys, when a Boer coming down the road told me he had seen some stray oxen near Rheboks Fontein, about seven miles up the road. Rheboks Fontein stands about four miles away from the river, so the boy who had gone up stream would not see the oxen. There was nothing to be done except for me to go after them myself, and I didn't like to leave Mary alone with the little one by the waggon; but she said she wouldn't be afraid if I'd promise to come before dark, and as I knew I could easily manage that, I suffered myself to be persuaded and went off. For some way up the road I could see her sitting inside the waggon tilt, waving her handkerchief to me, and then a low hill hid her from sight.

"I reached Rheboks Fontein in about two hours, and found the oxen there. It was then about three o'clock, and as I knew I should not be able to drive back the span by myself in time to reach the waggon before dark, I asked the Boer to let me put them into his kraal for the night so that I could send for them in the morning. He made no difficulty about this, but it took some time to get the cattle into the kraal, and by the time the last was in it was about four o'clock. It would be getting dark about six, so I had just time to get back and keep my promise.

"The evening was beginning to close in when I got in sight of the waggon. I could see the three boys squatting round a fire they had lighted, but no sign of my wife or child. However, I did not feel uneasy, as I thought they were inside the waggon, and, when I had come up, I went up softly and raised the flap of the tilt, to give them a surprise as I thought. They weren't there. I felt quite sick with fright for a moment. Then I thought they were perhaps hiding near to surprise me, and

I looked all round, but they weren't to be seen anywhere. I asked the boys where they were, and they looked at me with their mouths open. Almost beside myself with fright and worry, I asked them if they had seen them when they returned to the waggon. One of the Kaffirs had been back about two hours, and the others about one hour. The first said that there had been nobody with the waggon when he came back, and that he had sat down to wait, thinking I had strolled off somewhere with my wife and child. The other two said the same.

"I believe I went off my head for a bit. I know I ran down to the river, and along the bank shouting 'Mary,' till I was nearly speechless, until Kleinboy, my Tottie, who was a sensible fellow in his way, said it would soon be quite dark, that there was no moon, and that if the missus was lost we ought to be looking for her. That brought me to my senses, and all four of us held a consultation. We decided that they could not have crossed the river, therefore it would be useless to search on the other side; and, finally, it was agreed that Kleinboy should go back towards Roodebank, one of the Kaffirs onward to look between the road and the river, while the remaining Kafir and myself should go to the east of our outspan and search in the kloofs and kopjes of the Bushman's Berg.

"The boy I took with me was the one who had said he had returned to the waggon first, and I did so because the horrible idea had suddenly presented itself to me that perhaps he had murdered them. Of course the idea was absurd. The man could have had no motive for such a deed, but in my distracted condition reason had little to do with my thoughts. In fact the boy had a great regard for me. You know all these people have at least two names—"igama," or name given at the birth, and the "isibonga," or name assumed afterwards, generally in commemoration of some event or deed. Some Kaffirs have several "isibongas." A man is always addressed by his "isibonga," and he only allows his "igama" to be known to his most intimate friends, for he believes that the knowledge of his birth name would enable wizards or witches to do him harm. Well, when this boy first came to me, I asked him his "igama," and he wouldn't tell me; but I learned it after a time by overhearing him talking with a man of his own tribe. It was "U'mpisi," "The Hyena," and I startled him tremendously

by calling him by it when I next wanted him. He could never make out how I learned it, and regarded my knowledge of it as a proof of my wonderful power. From that moment I could depend upon him thoroughly. It was therefore the height of folly for me to suspect him of harming my wife; but, as I said before, I couldn't get the idea out of my head.

"It soon became pitch-dark, and we stumbled along over stones and rhinoster bushes towards the Berg, the spurs of which stretch down almost to the road. Every hundred yards or so we would stop and holloa, but not a sound did we hear in reply."

A few minutes before Tom had reached this point in his recital, Mrs. Carey, who had succeeded in putting the baby to sleep, had come out, and had seated herself on a low stool by her husband's side, whence, with a hand softly caressing his knee, she had been listening to him. She was not a beauty, but she was a pretty woman, and, what is of far more importance to a husband, a good wife.

"I think, my dear, that you had better take up the thread of the narrative now," said Tom.

I added my entreaties, and Mrs. Carey began:

"When Tom went away after the oxen, I watched him along the road as far as I could see him, and when he went out of sight I felt, for the first time, a little frightened. Everything was so still. There were some tall mountains over to my left that seemed so grand and silent that their height and vastness seemed to weigh on me, while on the other sides were bleak and desolate plains bounded by bare, rocky hills. The stillness and want of life made me feel as if I must cry out, if only to break the awful silence; and at last I had to get inside the waggon with Liza, and let down the flat of the tilt to shut it all out. I had some needlework to do and stitched away, while Liza played with an old rag doll on the floor of the waggon.

"Then occurred something for which I can never account. Whether it was the heat, or the stillness, or what it was, I, who am always so wide awake in the daytime, must have fallen asleep. Such a thing never happened to me before since I came to the Cape. How long I slept, I don't know, but when I awoke I didn't see Liza. I called her, scolding her for getting out of the waggon, and when she didn't answer at once I jumped out to look for her.

"That moment I can never forget. There was no Liza to be seen. How can I find words to say what I felt? My darling was lost. I felt sure of that, for I could see a good long way in every direction, and she was not to be seen. What was I to say to my husband when he came back and asked for our child? How could I tell him that I had neglected my trust and gone to sleep, and allowed her to stray away? I began to cry, of course; but that did no good, so I dried my eyes and tried to think. Then I saw the yellow flowers on the bushes down by the river, and thinking she might have seen them and have gone down to pick some, I ran there to look. Among the bushes I found her little hood, which had been knocked off by a branch, I suppose, and which, child-like, she had forgotten to pick up. At first I was seized with a horrible fear that she had fallen into the water and been drowned, but I saw that it was so shallow that that was impossible. Near the hood I found some pieces of pink heath, which the poor little dear had been picking. I had great hopes of finding her then, and I called her as loud as I could, but no answer came. I went up the river-side for a long way, but there was no sign, so I came back again and went down.

"Some way down below our waggon I came to a dry watercourse which ran into the river. The bottom of it was covered with sand and pebbles, and the high banks had flowering shrubs on them. I thought it was the sort of place the child would be tempted to wander up, and I turned up it. I soon knew I was right, for I found some more of the pink heather bells dropped on the sand. I walked on faster than ever now. The sun seemed to be going down. I didn't know how long I had been searching, for I did not know what the time was when I started out, but it seemed as if I had been searching for hours. Still I went on and on. I passed several other watercourses, which opened into the one in which I was, and of these I was afraid to think, for perhaps she had turned up one.

"At last the ravine, for it had grown to be a ravine by this time, with sloping heights on each side, divided into two branches. I was in despair—I sat down and sobbed aloud. Which branch was I to take? Then I blamed myself for wasting time, and jumped up and hastened up the one to the left. The day was closing in. I felt that I must find my little one before it was dark.

How could I leave her in the desolate wilderness all night? I stumbled on over the rocks which now lay thickly in the bed of the ravine, where thorny bushes seemed to spring up out of the growing darkness. At last, oh! joy, I saw a little shoe lying on a flat stone. I knew then that she could not be far off, and I called her. There was no answer, but I went on, looking about very carefully, and presently my heart rejoiced to see my little one lying fast asleep under a thick bush. Her little head was pillowed on her arm, a half-dried tear still glistened on her cheek—she had cried herself to sleep, poor dear—and a crumpled bunch of heath lay beside her.

"I needn't tell you," said Mrs. Carey in her soft voice, "that I snatched her up and covered her with kisses. Her poor little foot was cut, she was tired out and hungry; but I, alas! had nothing to give her. I soothed her in my arms, and then thought of going back again. But it was now pitch-dark. I could not move without striking against a rock, or running into a thorned bush. Now that the excitement was over, and that I had found my lost one, my strength seemed gone, my knees gave way under me, and I sank to the ground.

"Then, for the first time, I felt frightened about myself, and thought of my husband, and the state of mind he would be in on returning to the waggon and finding us both missing. I thought of the wild beasts, of leopards, and hyenas, and jackals, and wondered what my husband would do, if he came up the ravine in the morning looking for us, and found our half-eaten bodies. My mind ran on in a strange way. He would be beside himself with grief, I knew, for he loved us both. But, then, nothing could bring us back to life again. He would perhaps marry again, and I hoped his second wife would think as much of him as I had.

"While I was thinking all this, a large bird or bat swooped close past us in the darkness, nearly brushing my hair with its wings. I felt sick with terror. I expected every moment that it would swoop back again and peck at us, perhaps tear our eyes out. Liza was fast asleep in my arms, and I crept close up to the wall of the ravine, and crouched under a thick bush which seemed to protect me. Hours seemed to pass. Hours of intense darkness and awful solitude. Now and then strange sounds, the whoops of birds and the cries of animals, were borne down to me. Once

I put my hand down to support myself a little on the hard ground, and some clammy thing wriggled from under it. I suppose it was a lizard; but my first thought at the time was of a poisonous snake.

"A long time after this I heard a bark quite near. I thought it was my husband, tracking me perhaps with a dog, and I called out as loud as I could. As I did so, twenty or thirty different barks, answering I suppose the first one, sounded on the cliff above me, and presently some stones fell down from above. I wondered what it could be. I did not know if there were wolves or wild dogs in the country, but I thought perhaps it was a pack roaming about for food. Suppose they discovered me. I kept as still as possible, scarcely daring to breathe. Then, after a little while, some more stones and gravel fell from above. A stone must have struck Liza; she woke, and, frightened at finding herself in the dark, began to cry. Then at once arose a chorus of barks and grunts, and I heard scrambling noises on the mountain-side. I expected every moment to see a pack of wolves rushing upon us. I pictured to myself their glaring eyes and gleaming white teeth, and I remembered accounts I had read of people being overtaken by wolves in Russia. I could see distinctly a picture I had seen of a woman in a sleigh, dropping her baby out at the back, to delay the wolves and give her a chance of escape. I got up and tried to climb up a thorny bush; but it was too small to bear our weight, and I only tore myself with the long, sharp thorns. But I could put Liza in it, and I did, reaching up as high as I could to place her in a fork, and tying her to the stem with my handkerchief.

"I had hardly finished when I heard some more scrambling, and over the top of a rock, which stood out against the sky, I saw what seemed to be the head and shoulders of a man covered with hair looking at me with eyes that shone with a greenish-yellow light. I was so startled I gave one loud scream, when, oh! joy, I heard two fearful yells and then a voice crying, 'Mary,' from the mountain-side lower down. I put my hands to my mouth and called as loud as I could, and again came the answer. It was my husband. The hairy man did not seem to like the noise I made; he grunted once or twice, and then disappeared behind the rock. I waited, trembling, thinking he was perhaps creeping along to seize me.

But presently I heard voices and the noise of people walking on the opposite side of the ravine. I called out—"Here, Tom." He came hurrying down over the rocks in a headlong way, and the next moment I was in his arms. In a moment he thought of Liza, but I smiled at him to let him know she was safe, for I couldn't speak, and I showed him her in the bush. Poor little thing, how frightened and scratched she was!

"Tom had his Kaffir boy with him, the same who is with us now. He soon collected some dry sticks, and we lit a fire. It was impossible for me to walk back in the dark, and the ground was too rough for Tom to carry me, so we sat down to wait for daylight. It was not long in coming, and as soon as it was light we went back to the waggon. Tom said we had wandered quite five miles from it."

"And what did the hairy man turn out to be?" I asked.

"Oh, it was a baboon. It was their barking I had heard. It seems there was a troop of them on the hill-side."

"Yes," said Carey, "it was their barking that helped us to find her. U'mpisi and I had passed two-thirds of the night wandering up the kloof and about the spurs of the Bushman's Berg, shouting ourselves hoarse, and had nearly given up all hope of finding them till next morning, when U'mpisi's quick ears caught some distant sound. He crept on to the top of a ridge, and lay flat on the ground to listen. Then he said it was baboons barking, and that he thought, from the noise they were making, that they had discovered something and were signalling to each other. You can imagine how I rushed off in that direction, for I thought that if they had discovered Mary and Liza, they might attack them. We hurried along, up hill-sides, over rocks and stones, and down again into kloofs choked with thorn bush, sometimes tripping over unseen rocks or tumbling down steep banks that we hadn't noticed in the darkness, until, from a ravine below us, and not far off, suddenly rose a scream. We yelled back, to scare the baboons, if they were interfering, and ran on. You know the rest."

"And what account had Liza to give of herself?"

"She said that when her mother was asleep, she got tired of playing with her doll, and climbed out of the waggon. Then she saw the yellow flowers of the acacias down by the river, and ran to pick some. While she was playing about there, she

said a little grey bird came and fluttered quite close to her, and then sang and twittered, and sat on a twig near by. It seemed so tame she tried to catch it; when it flew off a little way, and twittered again, looking back at her. She said she thought it was calling her to play with it, and she followed it along till she had gone a great way and was very tired. Then she lost her shoe, and the stones hurt her foot; so she sat down and cried till she fell asleep. I've no doubt she followed a honey-bird. Those birds, you know, always try to attract one's attention by chirping and chattering in an excited way, and then lead you to the wild bees' nest; flying on a little way at a time, and then stopping and looking back to see if they are followed. It's just the thing to lead a child away."

AUTUMN IN THE STREETS.

DWELLERS in London have at least one advantage over their country brethren in autumn. The year is not so long in dying, and regrets for the summer we have lost are tempered by the anticipation of the gaiety and bustle of winter. One good shake, and our dead leaves are all on the ground, are shovelled up and carted away, and then we turn to the long rows of lighted streets, to the glare, the bustle, and general whirl of cabs and omnibuses, to exhibitions, theatres, parties, and universal distraction. It is the quick-step after the funeral march—regrets have been fired away in a parting volley—and we turn to the duties and pleasures of life with something like an appetite for our daily fare. The baked-potato can is greeted like an old friend, the muffin-bell suggests not so much the knell of parting summer as the bright fireside, and the glittering tea equipage.

Snug beside our fires, we regret all the less our holiday quarters—the coast, the highlands, the lakes, the rivers. Who would change, just now, the horizon of roofs and house-tops for chilly tarns and snow-topped mountains?

And then the streets have discounted winter already. "Three months after date pay to my order a turkey, a hamper of wine and spirits, raisins and currants for my Christmas pudding, and everything else I may want to keep the coming season in the old-fashioned festive way." You will get your bill negotiated at any street corner where the grocer has set up his store,

or the publican opens his glittering doors. I can put down my shilling now, and enjoy the prospect of a good York or Westphalian ham, on the condition, naturally, of being regular and constant in future payments—which how can I fail to be, with such an end in view? As for Christmas-cards, they are already rather “*passés* ;” we are thinking more about our greetings for Easter. Our Christmas annuals are going to press, and jaded editors are refreshing themselves with the savour of Spring numbers.

All this time the crackers and squibs, the fiery Catharine-wheels, the rockets and Roman candles are waiting for us ; and premature explosions in back gardens set all the dogs a-barking, and send Grimalkin flying over the walls. The parti-coloured football players appear with the fogs and shortening days ; and what a procession is setting in for dingy London streets and back yards of all the wandering tribes who have been working the country fairs and feasts till chill October warned them off their camping grounds ! If the flowers are no longer blowing and growing in the costermongers’ barrows, there are ferns and heaths, evergreens, and modest bushes. About Covent Garden the shops are crammed full of bulbs to make gay our houses and windows in the very bitterness of February gales and the east winds of March. And if the green fruit season is over, as far as the rush and press of trucks and waggons are concerned, and steamers hurrying across from distant ports, there is still all the work of storing and distributing to be done ; and the dried fruits from summer climes are everywhere making themselves manifest in grocers’ windows, while walnut shells litter the pavements, and suggest the crackling of Christmas fires.

Now are scene-painters and costumiers working double tides with flats, and carpenters’ scenes, and flies, and all the other devices, preparing for the coming flood of winter sightseers ; with wigs, and masks, and gorgeous spangled garments ; with giants, dwarfs, and flocks of strange beasts and birds belonging to the zoology of fairyland. The amateur, too, is at work, rehearsing songs, and arranging comic effects for the smoking concerts which will soon be coming on. Schools of arms, too, are collecting their pupils—youths from the City and from the Inns of Court, with Donald the hammer-thrower, who is in a tea warehouse, and Sandy the swords-

man, who travels about town for a credit draper. Dancing-classes are beginning to assemble, and programmes of suburban assemblies and quality balls are flying about.

At this time the publishers’ lists and the catalogues of the libraries are becoming of interest. The mists of autumn bring an appetite for new books. The old ones are best, perhaps ; but a new book is like an unexplored country, which offers unknown possibilities to the explorer. And if it comes to old books, there are the book-sales, which have dwindled during the hot weather, but are now drawing dealers and collectors. And here the tables are turned. It is the old books that have the pull ; latest editions are nowhere. And yet to see what a lot of old books may be had for the merest trifle ! Old books huddled together in bundles, and slightly catalogued as “*various*,” and knocked down in twenty seconds for as many pence. Book-sales, after all, are sad, depressing functions ; the dust of ages seems to get into the human system, and clog the pores of fancy.

Cheerful, and noisy enough too, has been the rush of students to the medical schools. Perhaps these young gentlemen require a good deal of boisterous cheerfulness to fortify them against the scenes of suffering and death around them. The medical student, indeed, is somewhat toned down from the Bob Sawyer type of earlier days ; but he is still of a robust and sportive character in a general way, and he contributes his full share to the liveliness of the autumnal term. As for the fully-fledged practitioners, now is their harvest time. Those who rarely trouble the doctor are sending for him now. The annual holiday is over, and the first greeting that London gives to her returning prodigals is generally in the form of an influenza or a stiff attack of bronchitis. Little demons in the way of germs lie in wait for us ; perhaps we have brought them in our baggage from the seaside or the Continent ; anyhow, they work their will on us as we return unwillingly to the mill, and they sprinkle measles and whooping-cough in the nursery, and turn the whole household upside down.

Now we wish that we could look forward to Christmas, and have more holidays then and come home joyfully crowned with ivy and mistletoe, and grow merrier as the nights grow longer ; but we are still a long way from Christmas, and, perhaps, there

are reserved for us days of delicious calm and soft tranquillity, such as November sometimes brings, in defiance of its evil reputation.

Then what more delightful progress than to wander about in London and to float heedlessly upon the full tide of life. Many cities we may visit; all kinds of life we may study; and yet not wander far beyond the cab radius; never are the streets more bright, nor is the whirl of vehicles and passengers more hilarious than when summer is past and the great transformation scene of the year is in full progress.

Even the sparrows seem full of renewed spirits. They, too, we verily believe have had their holiday and have come back with increased zest to their life in town. They have left the corn-fields and the hedge-rows, now getting bare and chilly, and they salute the familiar eaves, the aerial gutters where they were raised as nestlings, and the cat who was their youthful terror.

The cats, too, how delighted they must be that everybody has come home again, and that their solitary vigils with charwoman or care-taker have come to an end.

But there is another aspect of the approach of winter, far more sad and deplorable. There are the hungry, homeless, human waifs and strays, to whom the first touch of frost and sprinkling of snow bring poignant sufferings and misery. Is it not a reproach to our humanity that in this city, teeming with riches, there should be no assured shelter for the unfortunate in the rigours of a, perhaps, semi-Arctic winter? A shelter, a fire, even a meal; is that beyond the powers of our great municipalities to provide whenever the thermometer shows a dangerous degree of cold? A shelter afforded freely to all comers without question, without condition? A bed of straw, a weather-tight roof. It is what we give to the most worthless criminal under our care, and yet we deny it, practically, to hundreds of our fellow creatures.

Again a dark cloud of autumn lowers over us, which mingles with the other and increases its blackness. It is the great army of unemployed—those who have homes, but bare and desolate homes which may be torn from them at any moment. And about this solid nucleus of suffering—mostly patient and uncomplaining, a dark and ragged fringe of

humanity which has ceased to be capable of labour or tolerant of it, and which is ready to snatch at any opportunity for mischief.

We look down upon a vista of some of the noblest buildings in London from the vantage point of what used to be called the finest site in Europe. Wonderful the changes there in the past few years. Millions have been spent there—in street improvements, in public buildings, in enormous hotels; the spires and towers of Westminster rise in the distance, and the chief seats of government and administration lie between; and it is here the spectre rises, the threatening spectre of modern civilisation. You may see the apparition on any of these autumn days. A crowd assembles as birds assemble, coming from all points; police, too, are there in force. A meeting has been formed, a man emerges bare-headed from the crowd, a speech is delivered inaudible for the most part, and in dumb show, accompanied by cries, and jeers, and ribaldry from the outer fringe of disorderly people who have scented out the demonstration as the vulture scents its prey. Then there is a cry, "To the Mansion House!" "To Westminster"—or wherever the rendezvous may be—and the meeting breaks up and forms an irregular sort of procession, and so goes clattering through the streets, while prudent tradesmen whirl up their shutters as it approaches. Here and there a banner or threatening emblem makes its appearance, and the police hurrying after, alongside, and in front, seem to drive the crowd as it were a shuttlecock. It might seem easy enough to stamp out such demonstrations; but they are like the embers of fire among dry wood, and smoulder forth all round. The real remedy, indeed, is to stamp out the suffering—the real suffering which gives such things their force and impetus—to isolate poverty, by surrounding it with friendly hands, to organise not charity, but beneficence, and not to repress it, but to let it flow through every accustomed channel, and through many new ones, until the advent of winter shall cease to be either a terror or a reproach.

THE COLONEL'S TALE.

It was late—after midnight—and as we got up from the whist-table and gathered round the fire, Colonel Thornton said: "If you men are not too tired and don't mind

sitting up for another half-hour, I think I can tell you a good story."

We protested we were never less tired and could sit up till morning if necessary. So the Colonel began:

"My father, as you know, was a parson; but he took Orders late in life, after having been fifteen years at the Bar, and the events of which I am going to tell you he, himself, told me as having come directly under his eye when he was a barrister.

"It was at the Monmouth Assizes, in 18—, that a case was tried which became the talk of the neighbourhood and country for years after. My father was sitting in the Court of the Assistant Judge, when a note was brought him from a friend in the adjoining Court, asking him to come and hear a case of more than usual interest, the facts of which were these:

"Sometime before, a farmer's house, near Monmouth, had been broken into and robbed by men disguised and masked, the farmer murdered, and his servant shockingly ill-treated. Among other things which were stolen were two old-fashioned silver brooches, curiously inlaid with malachite, heirlooms of the family, and, although unremitting search was made, and the description of the lost articles made widely known, no trace of the murderers could be found.

"A month or two after the murder, however, a police-officer, in going through a common lodging-house in Bristol, noticed a dissipated-looking sailor lying on a pallet and resting his head on a small bundle. He asked him what it contained, and was told that it was 'only his kit.' The officer, not satisfied, opened the bundle, and almost the first things to fall out were two brooches made of silver and malachite. Struck by their curious beauty, and wondering how such a wretched-looking fellow could have become possessed of them, he suddenly remembered the advertisement and description of the stolen articles.

"How did you come by these?' he enquired.

"The sailor replied: 'By chance. When I came ashore some time ago, with plenty of money in my pocket, I met an old seaman who was down on his luck, and he offered to sell me these things, which had belonged to his mother. I was pretty flush, and gave him a good price for them, although they were useless to me. And that's all about it.'

"The police-officer, still dissatisfied, took him into custody. He was sent to Mon-

mouth Gaol, the brooches were identified, and he was committed for trial at the Assize on the charge of theft and murder. And," continued the Colonel, impressively, "as my father entered the Court, this man was being placed in the dock.

"Tall beyond the then average height of men, and gaunt, with an unkempt beard and an evil, yellow eye, and though evidently suffering from his long imprisonment, he yet presented a powerful and imposing front. The trial had begun, and he had just been asked the usual question, 'Are you guilty or not guilty?' and had answered in a hollow voice 'Not guilty, my lord,' when the entrance of one of the Court officials with a gentleman stopped the proceedings for awhile. And here I must explain this interruption.

"A few days before, a quiet, gentlemanly man, a Captain Forsyth, of His Majesty's Navy, had arrived at the chief hotel of the town on a fishing excursion; but the weather had been so adverse, that he was obliged to look elsewhere for amusement. Turning to the landlord for information, he was told of this trial as exciting considerable interest; and so it came to pass, that as the prisoner took his place at the bar, Captain Forsyth sent his card to the Judge, who gladly allowed him, as was then the custom, a seat on the bench.

"The case proceeded; witnesses were called to identify the brooches, the servants swore to the figure of the prisoner as resembling that of the murderer; no witnesses were called for his defence—no one defended him; everything pointed to his guilt, and the Jury retired to their room. In a few minutes they returned, and, amid the breathless expectation of the crowded Court, the Foreman announced their opinion that the man was 'Guilty.'

"Directly this word was uttered, the prisoner, who had been leaning as if for support against the side of the dock, raised himself to his full height, stretched out both his hands above his head, and, looking up, exclaimed in a broken voice, 'Not guilty, not guilty.'

"The Judge then asked him, as was usual, if he had anything to say before sentence should be pronounced, and the prisoner cried hoarsely, 'Not guilty, my lord, not guilty; before Heaven and man, I am innocent of this crime. I never set my eyes on the murdered man; I did no murder. Oh! Captain, Captain—' in his vehemence he addressed the Judge as if he were his

officer—"I am as innocent of this crime as the babe unborn." He paused; then suddenly, in a voice choking with feeling, he exclaimed: "Yes, yes, only one man can save me now; but he can do it, swear what you may. The Lord be thanked, that man is here!"

"A buzz of astonishment ran round the Court; the feeling of awe that had held the audience changed into one of amazement.

"Point him out to me," said the Judge.

"The man who can save me," replied the prisoner, "sits there beside you," pointing to the astonished Captain Forsyth.

"The Judge turned to Captain Forsyth and said: 'This man appears to know you. Is it the case?'

"Certainly not," he replied, much surprised; 'I never saw him before in my life.'

"Oh, Captain," broke in the prisoner, 'yes, you needn't start, I know you, Captain Forsyth. You are never going to swear away an innocent man's life like that?'

"It is curious, my man," the Captain replied, 'that you know my name; but I repeat that I never saw you before in my life.'

"What? Not know John Williams, of 'The Neptune?' The coxswain of the Captain's cutter?"

"Yes, I know John Williams; but you are not he. John Williams was the smartest man that ever served under me, and never likely to stand where you are now."

"Captain," repeated the prisoner, 'I tell you I am John Williams. A long illness, a hard bout of drinking, and this cursed imprisonment have made me what I am. And I will prove it, Captain, I will prove it, if you will only listen.'

"The sensation caused by this dialogue was immense. The Judge, the members of the Bar, and the spectators were equally astonished at the curious turn the affairs had taken, and, though believing the man to be guilty of a desperate deceit to save his life, were eagerly awaiting what should come.

"Captain," continued the prisoner, 'I am accused of murdering a man here on the twenty-fifth of June, more than nine months ago. Now, tell me, sir, was not John Williams—your coxswain—invalided home from the West African station on the last day of that month?'

"What the man says," remarked Captain Forsyth to the Judge, 'is perfectly true.

His Majesty's ship, "The Invincible," sailed with our invalided men for England on the thirtieth of June.'

"The prisoner went on: 'Yes, and I arrived in England at the end of July, weak and ill, and, getting my prize-money, went and drank it all away. And that's how it was I was found at Bristol, where I had gone for another ship; and ever since then I have been in this accursed jail.'

"The fellow is plausible enough," again remarked Captain Forsyth. 'He is certainly about the height of Williams. Well, my man, I suppose you can prove what you say.'

"Ay, ay, Captain! Do you remember, on the tenth of last June, giving orders for a night raid on the native town off which we lay looking out for slavers?"

"Yes, I do, to be sure."

"And that we were five boats in all. And the first to beach was the Captain's cutter. And the first man to jump out of it was you, Captain?"

"Well, this is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard!" And, turning to the Judge, the Captain said: 'Every word of this poor fellow's narrative is true, my lord. He may have picked it up somewhere; but I can't help beginning to think there is something behind. My ship is still on foreign service, and I have only returned to take charge of another one.'

"Well, go on, man?"

"One word more, Captain, and maybe you will believe me. As we were fighting in the town, a great nigger came behind you with his axe and would have cut you in half before you saw him, had not a man rushed between and stopped him with his cutlass; and yet not quite stopped him, for that infernal nigger's axe slipped down the cutlass and gashed the man's head open. Who was that man, Captain?"

"John Williams," was the reply, 'the coxswain of my cutter.'

"Ay, ay, Captain, and here is the cut which that axe made," and, bending down, he lifted with one hand his long, untidy hair, and with the other pointed to a huge and fearful scar running for several inches along the side of his head.

"Captain Forsyth leapt from his seat.

"Good Heavens, you are right! But how you have changed! My lord, this poor fellow had not sailed from the African coast when the murder was committed; it is impossible that he could be guilty of it. Williams, you saved my life; I thank God I have been able to save yours!"

"At these words everybody in the Court stood up and cheered the prisoner with the wildest excitement and enthusiasm; the Judge said that in discharging him he must at the same time compliment him on his gallantry; and the Foreman of the Jury then and there started a subscription for him which came up to something near thirty pounds. Captain Forsyth ordered a chaise to take him post-haste to London for the purpose of removing Williams from a place with such horrible associations, and of getting him an appointment from the Admiralty. The people insisted on dragging the chaise out of the town with their own hands, the horses were then put-to, and, amid deafening cheers, they drove off—and were never heard of again."

"Why was that?" someone asked, as the Colonel paused.

"Because it was a hoax?"

"What!" we all exclaimed. "A hoax?" We had listened breathlessly to the tale, which the Colonel certainly told admirably, the perspiration standing on his forehead as with horrible reality he personated the desperate sailor.

"Yes," he said, "a hoax. It was all a preconcerted arrangement; the Captain was merely a clever accomplice who played such parts for those of his associates in crime, who came near receiving their reward. This was probably his biggest performance; but though it answered well enough then, in these days of telegraphic communication and multiplied Navy Lists, it would be simply impossible."

THE CAVENDISHES.

WHAT'S in a name? Much every way, if its owner feels bound to act up to it. Of course I mean its *bonâ-fide* owner. I suppose the man who, disdaining to be called Bugg, gave notice that he was to be addressed as Norfolk Howard, would not trouble himself to act up to the Howard traditions. But for a real Howard, the case is very different. Howard, by the way, is one of our few great names which are older than the Wars of the Roses. In that struggle—so destructive to the nobles—most of the great families were either killed off, or so thrown out of the saddle, that they sank amid the ruck.

The destruction of the monasteries gave us our earliest nobility: Woburn and Tavistock, and the "Convent," whose garden is our London fruit market, made

the Russell family. Paget, Lord Anglesey, is Abbot, and Rector, and Vicar of Burton-on-Trent. Cavendish, who was one of Henry the Eighth's visitors to the doomed monasteries, got Welbeck and Bolton, besides much Abbey land in Hertfordshire.

The Caundishes or Cavendishes are a Suffolk family and take their name from the village near Long Metford, where, in the fine chancel with lofty clerestory, is buried Sir John of that ilk, Chief Justice of the King's Bench under Richard the Second, who was murdered at Bury by Jack Straw's people. He is remembered for his taste in beds—among them, "un lit de worstede, un lit de saferye poudre des popinjays, and un lit de vermayl"—and for his judgement about a lady, who claimed to be a minor, and said she would abide by his decision. He declined, wisely deciding that "no man in England has a right to pronounce whether a lady is under age or not."

The family continued loyal. Thomas, father of William the fortune-making Visitor, was Clerk of the Pipe in the Exchequer. George, the elder son, served Wolsey as gentleman-usher with a devotion which survived his downfall. George and William, in fact, are two types. The former clung to the old faith, "threw aside ambition," and was a failure. Even his "Life of Wolsey" was long attributed to William. He grew poorer as William grew richer. His son was a London mercer; his grandson sold the Cavendish manor; and then that branch disappears.

Not so the younger branch. Edward the Sixth gave William yet more Abbey lands. Under Mary he conformed, but did not disgorge his monastic estates. Thrice married, he got money or land with each wife; the third being Bess, the great Derbyshire heiress, daughter of Hardwick of Hardwick, and widow of Barley of Barley, who built "Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall," and finished Chatsworth; and who induced her husband to sell most of his other property and to buy land in her own county.

The S's on Hardwick point to her fourth marriage—with Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. She, too, kept up the family in the second son, rather slighting her eldest—one of Mary Queen of Scot's keepers and admirers—and leaving most of her property to William, who courted James the First, and paid ten thousand pounds—what a sum for that time!—to be made Earl of Devonshire. The second Earl, whose town

house was in Bishopsgate—where is Devonshire Square—is said to have died of over-eating.

William, the third Earl, was, like his father, a pupil of Hobbes the philosopher. He was a strong Royalist, though less famous than his brother Charles, who for a long time kept the King's cause in the ascendant in Lincolnshire, and was killed in a skirmish near Gainsborough, his horse having floundered into a bog. But the great Cavendish during the Civil War was a cousin, son of Charles, third son of William and Hardwick Bess. He, too, was William, which sometimes makes the history confusing. He had got Welbeck and Bolsover, but was so eager for Court patronage, that his entertainments to King James at those two places, commemorated in Ben Jonson's "Love's Welcome at Welbeck," and "Love's Welcome at Bolsover," cost nearly twenty thousand pounds.

The King made him Governor to the Prince of Wales, whom he counselled not to be too devout, "for one may be a good man and a bad king," and whom, at any rate, he made an excellent horseman.

When the war began, he lent the King ten thousand pounds, and raised a troop of knights and gentlemen. Hull, of which Charles made him Governor, "would not admit of him by no means, so he was very flat, and out of countenance." He won, however, several victories over Hotham and Fairfax, urging the latter to "follow the example of our heroic ancestors who used not to spend their time in scratching one another out of holes, but in pitched fields determined their doubts."

In 1644 he failed in keeping the Scots on their own side of the Tyne, the hard weather being much against cavalry, of which his force largely consisted. After Marston Moor he threw up his commission, replying to those who begged him to remain, "No, I will not endure the laughter of the Court!" and, transported with passion and despair at the way in which the army he had painfully raised was thrown away, he sailed to Hamburg.

Antwerp, he made his head-quarters. When Charles the Second went to Scotland to raise the army which was destroyed at Worcester, Newcastle begged him to reconcile the rival parties, Argyll and Hamilton, adding: "Get but the power into your hands, you can do hereafter as you please." He himself was trying to raise ten thousand men from the Elector

of Brandenburg and transport ships from the King of Denmark, when the news of Worcester put an end to everything.

Politics being hopeless, and his contempt for Clarendon—whom he spoke of as "a most lamentable man, as fit to be a general as to be a bishop"—keeping him out of Charles's Privy Council, he went in for horsemanship, buying "barbs," setting up a riding-house, and publishing "*La Méthode et Invention Nouvelle de dresser les Chevaux*." The cost of the work was one thousand three hundred pounds, and one of the plates—by Diefenbeke—represents Newcastle adorned by a circle of admiring horses. It must have been rather a struggle to keep up his stud, for when he left England he had only ninety pounds in his pocket; and Parliament showed its sense of his importance by confiscating his estates without allowing him to pay a composition.

At the Restoration he left his wife in pledge at Antwerp. He found his estate sorely impoverished; woods cut down; houses and farms plundered; sixteen years' rent lost. He recovered the land, which had been made public property, and the King gave him back what the regicides had bought; but still he lost lands worth fifty thousand pounds, and was forced to sell others to the value of sixty thousand pounds. Altogether, his wife estimates his total loss at nine hundred and forty thousand pounds—a vast sum, when we take into account the then value of money.

Charles did not do much for him except confirm the Garter which he had given him during his exile. He took no part in politics, having enough to do to repair the ruin of his estate; to publish an English version of his "*Horsemanship*, never found out but by the thrice-noble, high, and puissant Prince William Cavendish;" and to write plays—"So silly a play as all my life I never saw," says Pepys, of the Country Captain. He had always aimed at being the English *Mecænas*. Shirley and Davenant were with him through the wars; and (Warwick complained) "such kind of witty society diverted many counsels, and lost many opportunities." The grudging Clarendon calls him "a very fine gentleman," a verdict which his wife improves on by saying, "His behaviour was easy and free, and yet hath something in it of grandeur that causes an awful respect for him."

We now come back to the main branch, represented by William, first Duke, son of

the third Earl aforesaid. When twenty years old he was one of the four who held Charles the Second's train at the Coronation. Four years later he showed great gallantry under the Duke of York in the fight with De Ruyter. Then he went in for "No Popery," working in the troubled councils of the time to exclude the Duke of York from the succession. But, though he took this new road to popularity, he prudently kept clear of all plots. People tried to implicate him in that which cost Lord William Russell his life; but Russell was his friend, and he not only witnessed in his favour on his trial, but tried to persuade him to change clothes with him in the prison.

On James's accession he showed himself quite able to hold his own. As he was attending a levee, Colonel Colepepper asked him whether this was a time and place for excluders to appear. "You lie; I am none," replied Cavendish. The Colonel gave him a box on the ear, and was knocked down for his pains; and the King fined Cavendish thirty thousand pounds for brawling in his chamber. His mother brought bonds of Charles the First's for over sixty thousand pounds, and offered them instead; but James was obdurate. Cavendish, however, escaped from prison, gave Colepepper a public caning, and was chiefly instrumental in bringing in William of Orange.

In the interval he began Chatsworth, of which Bishop Kennet says: "Though the situation be somewhat horrid"—anything savouring of wildness was disliked in those unromantic days—"this really adds to the beauty of it; the glorious house seems to be art insulting nature." Under William, honours and titles rapidly multiplied upon him. He was Lord High Steward at the Coronation, and in 1694 was made Marquis of Hartington and Duke of Devonshire. Personally, he was one of the most dissolute of men—a lady-killer of the most decided kind. "Patriotism," lady-killing, horse-racing, and cock-fighting divided his life between them.

The fourth Duke is chiefly famous for having, by marriage with the heiress of the Earl of Burlington and Cork, brought in the great Irish estates, which added so much to the family's wealth and political importance. As a Prime Minister, he was not a success, and soon had to give way to the elder Pitt. His son is chiefly famous for his two wives: Georgiana (daughter of Lord Spencer, the friend of Fox and

Sheridan), who secured Fox's election by kissing the Long Acre voters; and Elizabeth (daughter of the Earl of Bristol) the original of the stolen Gainsborough. Both these women are noteworthy. Of Georgiana, Walpole says: "She effaces all without being a beauty; her lively modesty and modest familiarity make her a phenomenon." "Let's light my pipe at your eyes," was the expression of a coal-heaver's admiration, while she was out canvassing for Fox. No wonder she was one of the Prince of Wales's "flames," succeeding Lady Melbourne in that discreditable dignity. Of Elizabeth, Gibbon, whose offered hand and heart (fancy the grim historian having a heart to offer!) she refused, says: "She's much nearer the level of a mortal than Georgiana, but a mortal for whom the wisest man would throw away two or three worlds if he had them . . . If she choose to beckon the Chancellor from his woollack, in full sight of the world, he could not resist obedience." After her husband's death she lived at Rome, patronising Canova and Thorwaldsen, and other artists, and printing "éditions de luxe," among other things, of Georgiana's poems.

Georgiana's son, the last of the direct line, had his stepmother's fondness for art. His library was a wonder; so was his collection of coins and medals, though it only sold for seven thousand pounds, less than the seventh of its cost. The malachite doors and vases at Chatsworth are memorials of his mission to Russia, when Czar Nicholas was crowned in 1826. On this mission he spent fifty thousand pounds beyond the Government allowance, so that we need not grudge him the malachite doors and the other Imperial presents. His gigantic conservatory, three hundred feet long, served as model for the original Great Exhibition of 1851. These are all the Dukes of the name. But there are plenty of smaller nobility—the Earls of Burlington, for instance, the second of whom succeeded the childless sixth Duke.

That is how big properties grow bigger; moreover, this family has always had the art of gaining and keeping money. We shall see that the philosopher (for the Cavendishes, like the Boyles, have one of that rare class) was the oldest man of his time; and Field-Marshal Lord Frederick, third son of the third Duke, though he did nothing to deserve his bâton beyond "taking the trouble to be born a Cavendish," was almost as rich as the

famous chemist. Though wholly undistinguished as a commander, he was an enthusiastic soldier, and joined Wolfe, Monckton, Keppel, in an oath not to marry till France was conquered. He kept his vow; and the ladies, so far from resenting his conduct, left him legacies—Twickenham Park estate among others—all which went to his cousin, the first Earl of Burlington.

His name, by the way, reminds us of another Lord Frederick, of whom no one can think without sorrow. His death did measureless harm to the National cause in Ireland. English eyes, bewildered with the horror of the deed, naturally failed to see that the murder could not possibly have been done by the men whose strongest interests it was to foster the growing good feeling which that murder at once put a end to. It is just as if an evil Fate, like that which is sometimes the mainspring in the old Greek tragedy, was working to destroy the hope of real union and to keep alive the bitterness which fairer laws and a mutual good understanding promised to bring about.

But politics are not in our way. It is enough to say that, like Lord Spencer, who was Viceroy when Lord Frederick was murdered, his widow, Lord Lyttelton's daughter, is now a thorough Home-Ruler. She has recognised that the wretches who killed her husband had nothing to do with that party which, rightly or wrongly, believes it can see in Home-Rule the way to a true instead of a dead Union. So much for the titled Cavendishes. Two untitled members of the family deserve a word of notice.

Thomas Cavendish, pirate and circumnavigator, was not a credit to his name or country. He was an offshoot of the old stock, born at Grimston Hall, near Harwich; and, having squandered his fortune, he determined to repair it by joining Raleigh in his first plantation of Virginia (1585). Raleigh, though, like all the Tudor "worthies," was servile, and self-seeking, and Machiavelian in policy, had high aims and noble aspirations. Cavendish's aims were limited to buccaneering; and the way he, Grenville, and others treated the natives of what is now North Carolina, should shut the mouth of those who cry out against Spanish cruelty. As soon as he got home he planned an expedition on his own account, and sailed in July, 1586, from Plymouth with three ships and one hundred and twenty-three men. After

trying to burn the town of Sierra Leone, he got down to the Straits of Magellan through which he wound his way in mid-winter, stopping at King Philip's City only long enough to dig out and carry off the cannon which the poor Spaniards had buried when famine forced them to abandon the place. The place was not inviting, "for the noisome stench and vile savour wherewith it was infected through the contagion of the Spaniards' pined and dead carcases." He saw twenty-three of these starvelings (two women), who were trying to make their way by land to the River Plate. Cavendish himself fared badly enough in that wretchedest of all countries. He was six weeks in getting through, "and for quite a month we fed almost altogether on mussels, limpets, and birds, seeking for them every day as the fowls of the air do, in continual rainy weather." One starving Spaniard he rescued; but when the man was put ashore near Valparaiso to parley with a reconnoitring party, he made off and gave the alarm. Cavendish, therefore, sailed northward, burning what barques he met, and in one instance "tormenting a prisoner with his thumbs in a wrench," partly by way of warning a captured pilot to be "reasonable." By May he had reached the Chincha Isles, where he captured three big merchant ships, one worth twenty thousand pounds, burning all the goods which he could not stow on his own vessels.

On Puma Isle, in the Gulf of Guayaquil, lived "the great cacique, with his Spanish wife, and his palace chambers decorated with hangings of Cordovan leather, gilded all over, and painted very rare and rich," a successful attempt, it would seem, at that fusion of races, which for the Anglo-Saxon seems impossible. Alas! the foolish natives made a sortie to try to save a big ship lying at anchor; and in revenge for this their town was burned, palace and all. Burning and spoiling he reached Cape St. Lucas, in Lower California, and beat up and down for a month till the great Santa Anna, from the Philippines to Acapulco, came in sight. Her he captured after a six hours' fight, and took from her twenty-two thousand gold pesos, besides eighty tons—all he could carry away—of her six hundred tons of very rich merchandise. He had only two ships, having sunk the smallest for lack of hands; however, he found room for two Japanese and three Manila boys, and a Portuguese who gave him the map of China, described in Hakluyt. He also took

the Philippines' pilot, whom he afterwards hanged for trying to run him into Manilla. Of his two remaining ships, the "Desire" and "Content," the latter parted company when she had watched the "Santa Anna" and her five hundred and twenty tons of richest wares burnt to the water's edge, and was never heard of after. The "Desire" wandered about the Moluccas, and by mid-March sighted the Cape of Good Hope. On June 8 he discovered St. Helena; and, reaching the Lizard early in September, heard of the destruction of the Armada. Thence, after a four days' storm, "like wearied men, through the power of the Almighty, we got into Plymouth." And so completed the second English voyage round the globe, celebrated in "A Ballad of Master Cavendish's Voyage, who by travel encompassed the Globe of the World, arriving in England with abundance of treasure," and other songs of which the names only survive. This was in 1588; before 1591 Cavendish had squandered all his money "in gallantry and following the Court"—the Queen received him at Greenwich—and was planning another expedition. In this he wholly failed; he started too late—in August instead of July; his attack on Santos, in Brazil, was feeble; and, after again wintering in the Straits, he wanted to sail away home by way of the Cape of Good Hope. "You can't do that with so feeble a crew," said Davis of Davis's Straits, his second in command. "Well, then, I'll return to Santos and have another try," replied the navigator, who had evidently lost nerve through the hardships of the winter. He got back to the coast of Brazil, where Davis and he parted company, and he died of a broken heart just off St. Helena, crying out, most unjustly, that Davis had deserted him. A year after his death, Davis got to Berehaven, in Iceland, "with a remnant of fifteen, so feeble that they could not take in or heave out a sail."

Henry Cavendish, the scientist, born in 1731, was son of the second Duke of Devonshire's third son, Charles. He was a scientist and nothing else, living like a hermit, never marrying, and letting his income accumulate till, at his death, it reached nearly a million and a quarter. But he discovered the composition of water: "It consists of dephlogisticated air" (oxygen, we say), and "phlogiston" (hydrogen). He discovered nitric acid, which he called phlogisticated air; and he settled by experiment the exact composition of atmospheric air.

Watt was experimenting on the same subjects at the same time, and so was Dr. Priestley; and, as Cavendish was strangely uncommunicative, while they were in constant correspondence with Black, Lavoisier, Laplace, and others, he very nearly lost the credit of his discoveries.

He then experimented on latent heat, but never published the results for fear of clashing with Black, who had made heat his speciality. In electricity, too, he anticipated several modern discoveries; and he improved on the old method of determining the earth's density.

His habits were eccentric. He never received company, though he allowed his friends full use of his large library. Every day he left a note on the hall table of his house on Clapham Common, saying what he would like for dinner. He was so morbidly shy that he could not bear even to look at cook or housemaids. Almost his only visits were to the meetings of the Royal Society and to Sir J. Banks's at-homes. Lord Brougham met him at the former, and speaks of "the shrill cry that he uttered as he shuffled quickly from room to room, annoyed if looked at, but sometimes approaching to hear what was passing among others. His walk was quick and uneasy. He probably uttered fewer words in his life than any man who ever lived to fourscore, not excepting the monks of La Trappe."

Warming up when science was the question, he was dead to everything else. No one ever heard him express himself warmly on any question of religion or politics. He had, in fact, no human sympathy; widely differing in this from our other noble scientist, Robert Boyle, who, when a director of the East India Company, insisted that they should try to spread Christianity in their settlements; and who, besides getting the Gospels and Acts translated into Malay, had "Grotius de Veritate Christianæ Religionæ" translated into Arabic for distribution among the Mussulmans. Boyle did more: he gave largely to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, and bequeathed seven hundred pounds towards printing the Bible in Irish; a work which, had it been done in time, would have made the Irish as good Protestants as the Welsh are.

A far finer man this than Cavendish, whose many discoveries are vitiated by his belief in "a latent principle called phlogiston, which accounted for the phenomena of combustion," and which, of course, as he

partly saw by-and-by, was identical with hydrogen gas. Besides investigating hydrogen, Cavendish wrote much about the properties of "fixed air" (carbonic acid). He analysed the water of many London pumps, beginning with Rathbone Place, and showed that the earthy matters were held in solution by this fixed air, and that boiling would, therefore, at once, get rid of them.

This is something practical, and has done more good to "the public" than all the glories of the great Whig house. But still it is a grand thing for a nation to have great houses, whether Whig or Tory; and the fact that they survived the French Revolution, is a proof not only of English Conservatism, but also that the relations between the classes are closer in England than they were in old France at any rate.

"CLOSER THAN A BROTHER."

By G. B. STUART.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XII. GOOD-BYE.

"Are there any more letters for the post-bag, sir?"

"Yes; stop a minute, Dennis; it is only a note, and you can wait and take it."

John Bulteel had been trying to write this note all the afternoon; now, with the butler standing respectfully waiting, his fingers moved mechanically, almost independently of the brain that had been framing such elaborate sentences for the composition of this very letter.

What they wrote was simple enough:

"Bulteel, November twenty-fifth.

"MY DEAR TWISDEN,—If you can run down here on Friday afternoon, you will do me a great kindness. I have some papers which I wish you to take charge of, and I am sure May will be glad to see you. The cart will meet the usual train at Barkham to-morrow afternoon, and you had better prepare to stay a few days.

"Yours ever,

"J. BULTEEL."

John turned the signet ring on his little finger with nice precision on to the red sealing-wax, directed the envelope to Arthur's rooms in Bury Street, and tossed it over to Dennis:

"That is all, Dennis." Then, as the old man was leaving the library, he called after him carelessly—"You might bring

that pistol-case in from the gun-room, and the new rifle. I want to look them over. There's no fire in the gun-room, I suppose?"

"No, sir." Dennis stopped to answer the question; then, with the freedom of an old servant: "I beg your pardon, sir, but, if I might suggest, don't get looking over fire-arms by candle-light. It's a thing I've heard your father say a dozen times was most dangerous"—Dennis had no personal acquaintance with guns, and held them all to be infernal machines in disguise—"and Simmonds has had that rifle down and cleaned it thoroughly not three days ago."

"All right, Dennis; mind your own business, and bring me the pistols as I told you. Whoever said I was going to look them over by candle-light except you yourself? By-the-bye, don't forget to let George know that I expect Mr. Twisden by the usual train to-morrow afternoon. He had better take the cart over to Barkham, as I mayn't be able to go myself."

"Yes, sir; that will be to-morrow afternoon, sir?" Dennis repeated, surprised at the earliness of the order.

"Yes, don't let there be any mistake. I may be out to-morrow, or otherwise engaged, so I give you the order in good time."

"Very well, sir."

May was playing odds and ends of old tunes to herself, sitting in the boudoir after dinner. The boudoir had been rebuilt, and was essentially May's own room, just as the library at the other end of the house was her brother's.

"Play me 'Home, Sweet Home,'" said John, coming in quietly and standing behind her as she sat.

It was John's favourite tune; just the air itself without any variations. "Don't trouble to play the bit which sounds as if you were trying to get away from home as hard as ever you could and someone was dragging you back by the hair," he had said once, and May knew now when he asked for it exactly what to give: the melody once or twice through, sometimes with chords, sometimes with a plaintive, open accompaniment.

"Thank you, that is just what I like."

"After Christmas we must go up to town for a little, John, and see some sights and hear some music; you ought to hear Patti sing that."

May did not sing.

"I should not like it any better."

"I never knew such a prejudiced old

creature as you are ! Don't let anyone else hear you say such a thing, or they will think I have a boor for a brother !"

"Perhaps you have !"

"You know I don't think so, and I ought to know best !"

"We weren't very good friends at first, May."

"That was my fault," May answered, hanging her head a little; her brother still stood behind her and his hands rested on her shoulders. "I was arrogant and spoilt, and I was angry with you because you were not what I expected. I had built up an imaginary brother out of a few childish recollections and a lot of girl's impossible imaginings: of the real causes which go to the making of a man's character, I know absolutely nothing. Do you know, John, if you had been the man I made you in my mind, I should have detested you in a week? And instead of that, and in spite of all our quarrellings, you have forced me into——"

"Liking me a little !"

"Loving you with all my might !"

"Ah !" It might have been amusement at her confession, or triumph perhaps: then John bent down and kissed her quickly on both her eyes.

"How you startled me !" she said, jumping up and rubbing them hastily; perhaps there had been tears in them. "You do everything different from the rest of the world ! You even kiss people topsyturvy ! That comes of fifteen years in Australia, I suppose, where everything must be upside down !"

"Well, give me an English kiss, now, straightforward; it is time you were in bed. Do you know that Arthur is coming down to-morrow !"

"No. Is he ? What for ?"

"To take over some important papers, and to stay a few days as well. He is a good fellow, May. I hope you like him and trust him as much as I do !"

"Oh yes, we are great friends." May was gathering up her music and answered carelessly.

"I am glad of that; he is to be depended on for advice or help if ever you want it."

"I shouldn't want it, John, as long as I had you."

"No, of course not; not as long as you had me. But Arthur is a much better fellow than I am ! Good-bye, May."

"Good-night, John, I suppose you mean !"

Alone in the library. There lay the

pistols upon the writing-table, the rifle across the arms of a big chair; John, looked at them carefully, they were all unloaded. Then he unlocked a table-drawer, and brought out the long, blue envelope, which he had carried down from town that morning; he addressed it to Arthur Twisden, Esq., and slipped it under the cover of the blotting-book. The big house was very still, and outside a soft rain was falling, which seemed to have hushed every other sound. John Bulteel sat and thought; it is wonderful how the mind will travel over time and space in the supreme moment of joy or pain. He was back on Wambo again, smoking his evening pipe outside the hut with his partner beside him. "You are in a deuce of a hurry to get rid of me," someone said. Then, in a flash, he was standing beside the water-hole, looking down on the dead face of the man who had been closer to him than a brother, he remembered, thinking "it is all over, then," as Messenger poked his warm muzzle into his hand, looking down anxiously, too, on the dead master. And now, what is this ? A girl with ruffled yellow hair, and angry, tearful eyes; a girl, whose face is strange and yet familiar; whose voice has a peremptory ring in it, that brings distant Queensland into every-day English life ! And presently her arms are round his neck, and her cheek is laid against his; his heart beats as if it would suffocate him; but her white breast is unmoved by any emotion beyond that of gratitude—a cold, feeble spark, beside the raging, restless passion of his reckless love ! And so on through the different scenes of his nine months in England; sometimes, he is out in the fields—his own fields—or across the park on "Snowstorm," man and beast struggling for the mastery; or pacing the terrace which looks down upon a wealth of summer roses, or listening to "Home, Sweet Home" on the verandah in the twilight; but the girl's face is always there, now angry, now penitent, turned away in irritation, or held up to him for forgiveness. And he can picture the face now, lying with white eyelids closed, and with yellow hair unbound upon the pillow; sleeping as young and innocent people sleep in the certainty of a happy awakening. He has risen, and loaded one of the pistols; with careful hands he has brought out oil-bottles and leathers from a cupboard and disposed them about the table, to give the appearance of accident, so as to rob to-morrow's disclosure of its shame; then he

takes something from his pocket-book and kisses it again and again, a little bunch of dead violets, tied with a faded silk.

Ah! that face upon the pillow; does it stir? Does it turn with a sigh? Will its awakening be as joyful, as calm as heretofore, or will it be aroused to horror, and despair, and blood?

With a groan that shook all his strong frame, he laid the pistol down again; it was harder to relinquish his intention than to carry it out, but he could not face the thought of May's awakening.

"I must wait until she is away, out of the house," he said, "there must be no shock to her; I had not thought of that!"

And the pistol lay on the table, loaded and ready to pay the reckoning of this nine months' mistake!

CHAPTER XIII. AFTERWARDS.

"COULD someone speak to Mrs. Haddington on business?"

Certainly! Mrs. Haddington was entertaining her step-daughter at five o'clock tea, on Friday afternoon, the day after her return from her short honeymoon. She was rather pleased than otherwise to show May how much she was already in request in her new sphere, and fluttered away, begging May to make herself quite at home, and pour out tea for Charles if he came in—a great sign of favour.

It was Arthur Twisden who was waiting in the Vicar's study.

"Good Heavens, Arthur! what is it?" Mrs. Haddington almost screamed, as she caught sight of his face.

"Bad news, Mrs. Haddington. Can you take it quietly and make no sound for May's sake?"

"Yes, yes; is it my husband?"

"No; it is Bulteel."

"What! Is he hurt?"

"He is dead; shot through the heart!"

"Shot! Oh, Arthur, who did it?"

"An accident. He had out some guns to clean, apparently, after lunch to-day, when May had left to come down to you. Dennis saw him about two o'clock, and they had some joke together about the pistols. Dennis said he hoped they were all unloaded; he had been too nervous to look close at them. Then the servants went to their dinner, and no one saw him again alive. Someone went into the library at four, and found him lying back in his chair quite dead. The pistol was in his hand, and his arm lay on the table in

front of him—the bullet right through his heart. He must have held it clumsily, pointing towards himself, without noticing that it was charged. They had sent for Morton, and he was there when I arrived just now; but he said he must have been several hours dead. Probably it happened just after the men went to dinner. It seemed providential that May was here, and that I had arrived to do some special business with poor Bulteel. You must manage to break it to her, Mrs. Haddington, and keep her here for the present. I am afraid it is a bad job I am giving you; but it is fortunate that he and May have never been so much to each other as ordinary brothers and sisters! I must get back to Bulteel at once."

"Mr. Haddington wants—— Gracious, Arthur, what brings you here?"

It was May standing at the study door. Then they told her.

After John Bulteel's funeral, Messrs. Taper and Twisden produced the will which their deceased client had left under cover to Arthur Twisden, and which he had handed immediately to the senior partners of the firm. It was a curious will, the lawyers thought, and executed in a curious manner by a perfect stranger; but even the least original among us behave oddly as regards our testamentary arrangements; and John Bulteel had always been stranger than other men. Besides, there was perhaps a reason in this case for the execution of the will by an unknown solicitor; for the testator, leaving Bulteel and all its belongings in land and money to his only sister, bequeathed the sum of seven thousand pounds to his friend, Arthur Twisden, "in memory of their recent conversation at the Grafton Club." This same seven thousand pounds being the sum which John had received from Queensland after the sale of Wambo.

"By George!" cried Arthur, when he read the bequest, "what a generous fellow he was! He had set his heart on my marrying May, and he was determined to make it possible for me in the most gentlemanlike manner. But to be sure, if he hadn't died in this terrible sudden way, the legacy would not have helped me much. Perhaps he felt seedy on that night he dined with me in town—why, it was only Wednesday last!—and had a kind of prevision of death. Poor fellow! and poor May! She takes it more to heart than I expected."

One of the letters which fell into May's hands about this time, was an ill-written grimy scrawl from one George Strutt, who wrote to Mr. Bulteel, in ignorance of the catastrophe, informing him of his return to England from Australia, and asking for employment or a recommendation.

"I should rather like to see him, Arthur," May said. Arthur had been May's right hand, and her word was his law; but he demurred a little at this.

"Do you think you are fit for it, May?"

"I should like it. You know I knew so little of his life all those long years, and I should like to see someone who had known him well, to whom, I am sure he has been kind."

So George Strutt was fetched, and came, looking thoroughly uncomfortable, into the presence of his old master's sister, who rose up with a white face that smiled sadly, and held out her hand. "You were the overseer, I know; my dear brother has mentioned you to me once or twice. I think it would have given him a great pleasure to have seen you again—he loved everything connected with Wambo!"

"Yes, ma'am. I beg pardon, miss I should say: he and Mr. Bell was very close chums—and better masters no man would ever need to look for. To think of their both being cut off so sudden like, within the year!—within the year!" Strutt repeated, feeling that he did not quite know what to say, and clinging to what seemed a safe and appropriate phrase.

"I thought perhaps you would be able to tell me something of their life there, Strutt?"

"Yes, miss; but there isn't much to tell. Sheep-farming in Queensland is rough work for master and man, and there ain't much change in it, year out, year in. Your poor brother, miss, and Mr. Bell worked just as hard as the men they employed; and I'm sure, if he'd been here to speak for me, he'd have told you that I was a sober, responsible man, as could be recommended to any position of trust; but I'm tired of backwoods life, that's the truth, and wanted to come home and settle, same as Mr. Bulteel did himself, after poor Mr. Bell's murder."

"They were very much attached to each other, were they not?"

"Like brothers born, miss, or even closer, for I've known brothers that shouldn't bear the name! Mr. Bell was like a dog, following Mr. Bulteel about,

and when Mr. Bulteel was a bit high with the men, I've known Mr. Bell speak to them afterwards about it and make it all square; he used to say as how the boss came of an old family, and it was in his blood to order people about, which is what put men's backs up a bit in Australia! They fell out sometimes, as the best friends will, and I've seen Mr. Bulteel's black eyes flash up a sudden, as if he couldn't keep back his temper; but he never laid a hand on Bell, and I believe if he had a done so, Bell would have taken it from him without a word back, he loved him so!"

"I will do what I can to get you a situation," May said, as she dismissed George Strutt; but to Arthur she afterwards remarked: "I don't believe he knew dear John as well as he pretended. He spoke of him as having black eyes, and you know how blue they were."

May Bulteel married Arthur Twisden about a year after her brother's death; and the Twisden - Bulteels and their children now reign in the old home. May is devoted to her husband, and he loves her "with all his heart," as he once told John Bulteel. If his heart has been less developed than his head, he is scarcely to blame; it is rather the result of our modern system of education, which puts public-school life and competitive examinations, with a life about town to follow, in place of home associations.

If May sometimes wonders that her husband fails to understand all her mind, she recalls how once before she had been mistaken in trying to gauge a man's character with the plummet of a girl's restricted experience.

And, perhaps, in some "land very far off" John Bell and John Bulteel have met again!

Now Ready, price Sixpence,

ALL THE YEAR ROUND,

AN UNCONVENTIONAL

ALMANACK

FOR 1888.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CONTAINING

THE ENVOY'S DAUGHTER,
THE ROMANCE OF A YEAR.

The Envoy's Story. Three Dear Girls.

TABLE OF EVENTS, 1886-7. OBITUARY.

SKETCH OF THE PAST FIFTY YEARS.

CALENDAR FOR 1888, etc., etc.

Sold by all Booksellers, and at Railway Bookstalls.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.